



December 7, 2005

Dear Community Friends:

Crime Prevention During The Holidays

This is the second of our newsletters focused on safety and security during the holiday season. These recommendations will hopefully reduce your risk of being a crime victim during this time of year.

Prevention Tips At Home

- Don't openly display your Christmas tree and gifts in the front window so it's easily visible from the street. You increase the possibility that a burglar will be tempted to gain entry and steal the gifts.
- When disposing of the packaging in which gifts and other purchases come, realize that when you place these out for recycling or trash collection, those boxes sitting out on the curb on collection day give a passer-by a pretty good indication of what's in your home. Recycle the packaging, yes - but break the boxes down first, put them inside out so the exterior writing does not show, and don't put them on the curb until collection day.

Traveling Away For The Holidays

- Let your trusted neighbors know that you plan to be out town so that they can watch your home for you. If they see suspicious activity while you are gone, they will know to call 911 for you.
- Have the Post Office hold your mail.
- Don't leave descriptive telephone answering machine messages, such as; "You've reached the Wilson's. We're away skiing for the holidays and won't be back until...." Strangers don't need to know your schedule or that your home is going to be unoccupied for an extended length of time. Bad guys love to hear that they have plenty of time to break in and ransack your home.

Holiday Parties

- If you will be hosting a party, establish a guest list and greet your guests at the door. Be careful when opening your home to "uninvited guests."
- Balance the desire to want to show off your valuables and treasures with security consciousness. Put easily portable valuable items out of sight. This will reduce the threat that they may be stolen. Also, with those items stored away, your guests won't inadvertently mention the priceless items they have seen to others.
- If you are going to be serving liquor, do it responsibly! Have a good selection of non-alcoholic beverages to offer. Serve coffee, tea and water as the party winds down. No one really needs "One for the Road."
- If a friend has had too much to drink, insist on making other arrangements for getting them home safely, or offer to let them stay overnight. Remember: Drunk Drivers are dangerous to themselves and others.
- **Do Not Drink And Drive Yourself!** If you attend a Holiday Party and over indulged, take a cab, have someone give you a ride home, ensure you have a designated driver, or impose upon your hosts to let you stay there and rest a while. Better for you to crash on their couch than into someone else.

A Word On Charities

Be cautious of those going door-to-door collecting for charities. Ask to see an ID that identifies them with that charity. Never give cash. Please report suspicious people. If your gut tells you "something is not right," it probably isn't. Call 911 or our non-emergency number (206) 625-5011 to report the incident.

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon, SPD South Precinct Crime Prevention